



Morehouse Parish, LA

WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

July 2009

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Market Research | Economic Development Consulting | Strategic Planning

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Morehouse Parish Workforce Analysis

Executive Summary

July 31, 2009

Introduction

This workforce analysis documents the labor resources available in Morehouse Parish, LA. Using stringent survey and statistical methodology, analysis provides current workforce data not elsewhere available.

This study finds that there is a current pool of over 5,550 available workers. These are working age people who are not currently employed but desire employment. This pool of potential workers is comprised of the traditional “unemployed” who have recently lost a job and meet all of the state criteria defining “unemployed.” The available labor pool documented in this analysis also includes people who are returning to the workforce after an extended absence (i.e. a parent returning to the workforce after taking time to raise children), separating military, early retirees who now want to return to the workforce, recent graduates who are entering the workforce, and people who have relocated to the area and want a job.

Among this pool of over 5,550 available workers, 4,350 are seeking full-time employment. In addition to this group there are 880 employed people who are now working part-time, but would prefer a full-time job. This brings the total number of people interesting in finding full-time work to 5,230. The average wage sought by this group of workers is \$9.75 per hour.

Within the pool of 5,550 available workers are 1,069 people who have worked at International Paper in Bastrop at some point in their careers. Among former IP employees, 788 want to find a full-time job. The average wage sought by this group is \$10.76 per hour.

Among those currently employed, there are two additional pools of potentially available workers. The survey results indicate that approximately 800 workers would switch jobs for higher wages. On average, this group of workers is seeking an additional \$1.83 per hour. Additionally, there are 260 workers who are currently underemployed based on skills and previous work experience.

The available and potentially available labor resources found by this study are summarized below:

Not Currently Employed, Seeking Full-Time Work	4,350
Employed Part-Time, Seeking Full-Time Work	880
Currently Employed, Would Switch Jobs for Higher Wages	800
Currently Underemployed Based on Previous Experience and Education	260
Total Potential Labor Resources	6,290

There is an extended list of key findings from this analysis that begins on Page 5 of this report. A tabulation of all survey results is presented in Section 2. Cross tabulated results for the “not currently employed,” “currently employed,” “underemployed,” and “former IP employees” are presented in subsequent sections.

Younger Associates conducted this workforce analysis to assist Tamerica, Inc. in the creation of a strategic economic development plan for Bastrop, Morehouse Parish, LA. Younger Associates (YA) applied proven methodology that the firm has developed over 19 years of research in support of economic development initiatives.

The YA workforce survey process captures the broadest possible cross-section of data and reaches all sectors of the workforce. A YA workforce analysis captures the true demographics of the labor market area and accurately measures labor supply. The results of YA's work have been used by economic and workforce development agencies across the country for successful industry retention, expansion, and attraction programs, and for corporate location decisions.

To meet the objectives of the economic development planning process in Bastrop, the workforce analysis focused on the labor supply in Morehouse Parish. A survey was conducted among a statistically representative sample of the parish population to document the skill sets among the workforce, quantify hidden labor reserves and to identify opportunities and challenges related to the workforce supply.

The data documented in the survey included:

- Current employment status (employed, not employed, underemployed)
- Work history
- Future work/occupational preferences
- Salary and benefit requirements
- Education levels
- Training needs and preferences
- Work limitations or barriers
- Commute patterns
- Demographic characteristics of labor force

Methodology

Based on the population of Morehouse Parish, a sample size of 400 households was determined to be sufficient to provide statistically valid sample with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of $\pm 5\%$.

A survey questionnaire was developed to support the data collection objectives of the survey. The survey questionnaire is presented in Exhibit 1 of this report.

The survey was administered to a random sample of the study area population stratified to be representative of the demographic profile of the working age population of the parish.

To achieve the required response rate and to effectively reach all demographic and socio-economic segments of the population, the survey was conducted using intercept interviews at popular retail centers in all parts of the survey area. This method allows more precise and complete data collection and generates a positive public response to the overall study process.

A four-member interview team from Younger Associates traveled to Morehouse Parish to conduct the in-person interviews. The interview sites and schedule were as follows:

Wednesday, April 29: Arrive in Bastrop, familiarize team with study area

Thursday, April 30: Bastrop – Super Foods
Bastrop – Wal-Mart

Friday, May 1: Mer Rouge – Food Fast
Bonita – City Hall
Bonita – E-Z Pak
Bastrop – Feed & Seed
Bastrop – California Stop #1

Saturday, May 2: Log Cabin – Log Cabin Grocery
Beekman – Northworthy Truck Stop
Bastrop – Wal-Mart

All data from the survey responses were entered into a database for tabulation and analysis. This report contains the full tabulated survey results. In addition, profiles are included in this report for those respondents who were "*currently employed*," those who were "*not employed, but interested in employment*," those who were "*underemployed*."

Response Rate

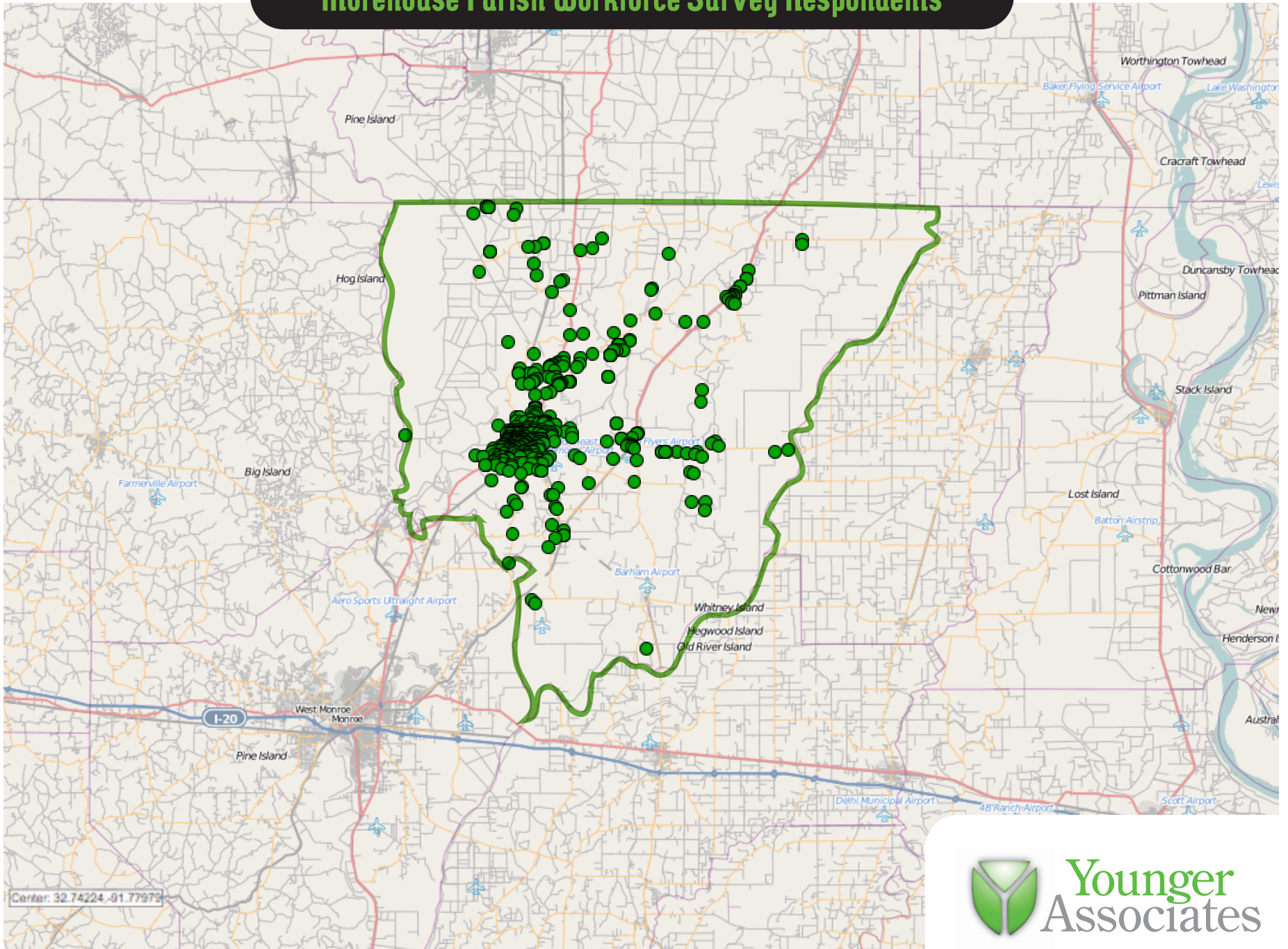
A total of 463 interviews were completed during the team's visit to the study area. To help insure a high response rate for the survey, members of the economic development foundation worked with local media to alert residents that the survey teams would be in the parish. Overall, the survey team experienced good participation from area residents.

The total completed survey responses met or exceeded the target number of 400 responses. Responses were deemed to be statistically representative of the study area population demographics and sufficient for reliable analysis of the workforce. The overall margin of error for the survey, based on the number of responses received, is $\pm 4.46\%$.

Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau and Claritas, YA compared the demographics of the survey respondents to the demographic profile of Morehouse Parish. The demographic distribution of the survey respondents closely mirrors the demographic profile of the working-age population (18-65) of Morehouse Parish. This is a strong supporting indicator that the survey results are highly reliable.

The map on the following page depicts the distribution of survey respondents in Morehouse Parish.

Morehouse Parish Workforce Survey Respondents



Key Findings

Key characteristics of all survey respondents

The following are key characteristics of the total population of survey respondents. A full list of all tabulated results is included in this report in Section 2.

- 59.9% of those surveyed were currently employed.
- Among those currently employed, 5.2% are underemployed.
- 40.1% of the survey respondents are not currently employed. This includes those who are seeking employment (unemployed) and those not currently seeking employment that are not on unemployment rolls or otherwise counted as unemployed.
- Among those not currently employed, 82.9% are interested in finding employment.
- 66.1% of all respondents have lived at their current address for 20 or more years. 17.1% report having lived in the area for less than ten years. Among those living in Morehouse Parish less than 10 years, 56.1% reported they had lived in the parish previously.
- 95% of all respondents are not currently attending any type of school.
- Educational attainment of survey respondents:
 - 83.7% have at least a high school diploma or equivalent
 - 27.1% have education above high school but less than a bachelor's degree
 - 10.4 % have a bachelor's degree or above

Key characteristics of respondents currently employed

A full profile of tabulated results from workers who are currently employed is in Section 4 of this report.

- 59.9% of the respondents are currently employed.
- 13.0% of those employed indicate they are self-employed.
- 11.3% of the employed respondents indicated they held a second job.
- 63.4% of those employed report an annual income of under \$35,000.
- 71.6% reported being paid an hourly wage. Among this group of hourly wage earners, 55.4% indicated they would not change jobs at this time. Those indicating they would change jobs report an average hourly wage increase of \$1.83 to do so.
- 41.5% of the respondents travel less than 15 minutes to work.
- Among those employed, 71% work in Morehouse Parish while 29% work outside Morehouse Parish.

- 43.2% of those currently employed are interested in receiving training/education to acquire new jobs skills. Among those interested in training/education, the following are the most frequently reported:
 - Any/Open to guidance as to type 22.9%
 - Medical Related 12.7%
 - Computer, General 10.2%

- The portion of the workforce in Morehouse Parish interested in training is smaller than the 65-80% rate that YA typically sees in other areas where the firm has conducted similar surveys.

- Among those currently employed, 34.4% reported working shifts in the past 3 years.

The following table summarizes the commute patterns among currently employed survey respondents.

**Morehouse Parish Residents
Employed Survey Respondents Place of Work**

Place of Work	%
Ashley County, AR	3.0%
Dallas County, TX	0.3%
Harris County, TX	0.3%
LaFourche Parish, LA	0.3%
Morehouse Parish, LA	71.0%
Orleans Parish, LA	0.6%
Ouachita Parish, LA	18.6%
Richland Parish, LA	0.3%
Union Parish, LA	0.9%
Warren County, MS	0.6%
West Carroll Parish, LA	0.3%
Regional	3.9%
	100.0%

Key characteristics reported by respondents not currently employed

- The primary reason for non-employment cited (30.0%) was “laid off or company closure.”
- The survey found that 18% of respondents that were not currently employed had been employed at International Paper at some point in their career. It appears that the majority of former IP workers are still available within the Morehouse Parish Workforce. (A profile of workers who have been employed at IP during their career is included in Section 7 of this report.)
- 18.5% of those not currently employed indicated they had worked for International Paper.
- Among those not currently employed, 82.9% indicate they would like to be employed.

Key characteristics reported by respondents not currently employed, but interested in employment

A full profile of tabulated results from those not currently employed is in Section 3 of this report.

- Among those interested in working at the present time, 78.5% want to work full-time while 21.5% prefer part-time employment.
- The most frequently reported employable skills reported by those not currently employed are:

-Office & Administrative Support	9.7%
-Manufacturing – production/unskilled	9.7%
-Construction & Building Trades	9.0%
- The average hourly rate that a respondent would accept to begin work is \$9.75.
- 47.4% indicated they would accept a job without insurance.
- 69.6% would drive more than 30 minutes one-way to work.
- Among respondents not currently employed, 70.6% indicated interest in training/education to acquire new job skills. Training for the following occupational groups are the most requested:

-Any/Open	19.5%
-Computer - General	19.5%
-Special Trades	11.0%
-Medical Related	9.8%
- Among those interested in employment, 56.1% indicated they would work shifts.
- Educational attainment of those interested in employment:
 - 4.9% hold a bachelor’s degree or higher
 - 22.6% have some post secondary education/training, but no four-year degree

Key Characteristics of the Underemployed

A full profile of tabulated results from those not currently employed is in Section 3 of this report. A worker is considered underemployed if they have previously worked in a higher skill level occupation than the one they have now, or have had demonstrable training or certification for a higher skill level occupation, and desire to work in a higher skill level occupation than the one they have now.

- The most frequently cited skills among the underemployed (56.3%) are general construction and special trades (i.e. plumbing, electrical).
- 100% of the underemployed reported no limitations to obtaining work, such as lack of transportation or physical disability.
- 25% of the underemployed currently work in retail.
- 18.8% of the underemployed work in some type of construction job, but report that they are working below skill level in that job.
- The 5.2% of workers in Morehouse Parish who self-reported themselves as underemployed is a lower percentage of the labor pool than YA has encountered in other labor markets across the U.S. Overall, YA has found that the typical portion of the workforce this is underemployed is 18%.
- Some respondents may not have accurately responded to the underemployed series of questions on the survey as they did not have specialized skills or training as the question indicates. Some lower-skilled manufacturing workers do not consider themselves underemployed if they have found a lower paying or lower skilled jobs such as retail.